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FOREIGN INFLUENCE

Technical progress has always been especially affected by outside influence because it is easier to imitate an invention than to duplicate it. Long before the dawn of history savage tribes learned from other tribes the use of fire and the art of chipping flint, and the rate of foreign technical cooperation has increased ever since. When the Europeans first settled in North America they learned about maize and other crops from the American Indians. After the United States was established it had to seek abroad for advanced technology. As Thomas Jefferson wrote in 1820 in his old age:

In an infant country like ours we must depend for improvement on the science of other countries, longer established, possessing better means, and more advanced than we are. To prohibit us from the benefit of foreign light is to consign us to long darkness.

The United States welcomed thousands of highly skilled workers from Europe and millions of dollars' worth of investments — mainly from England and the Netherlands — for building railroads and industrial plants. The search for foreign technical improvements still goes on, and much of it is now a part of the government's technical cooperation program. — *From the National Development and How it Works by David Cushman Coyle.*